

From the Editor's Desk...

High-Ranking Masons Back Out of Debating John Salza

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Over the past couple of years we've been pleased to team up with an exciting new organization here in St. Paul called The Argument of the Month club (AOTM). Founded by a small group of young Catholic men who'd grown weary of mealy-mouthed Catholicism at the parish level, the AOTM is a monthly event for men only, which features a good meal, good beer and a lively debate on various aspects of Catholic teaching, liturgy, moral theology, etc.

What started out as a handful of guys has since morphed into a thriving group of more than 400 who get together once a month for the purpose of fellowship and apologetics. Nationally-recognized speakers such as Christopher Ferrara, Dale Ahlquist, Michael Voris, Robert Sungenis and Fr. Robert Altier are among those who've tackled tough questions in what is fast becoming one of the most interesting debate venues in the country.

On January 11, 2011, *The Remnant* sponsored John Salza to come to the AOTM to debate the resolution that Freemasonry is compatible with Christianity. In one of the more highly anticipated AOTMs thus far, former Mason Salza's debate proved to be as interesting as it was controversial.

First, there was Mr. Terry Tilton, a Past Grand Master of Masons of Minnesota and Protestant minister, who agreed to debate Salza on the topic. Tilton was a formidable adversary. A Grand Master is the highest ranking Mason in a given state (similar to a governor of a state) who has superior knowledge about the "true meaning" of Freemasonry. Tilton's status as a Past Grand Master, coupled with his role as a public preacher of God's Word, made him one of the most credentialed debate opponents we could have found for Mr. Salza. Nevertheless, three weeks before the debate, Mr. Tilton backed out, claiming he didn't have "permission" from the current Grand Master.

We continued our search for a debate opponent, and eventually found another high ranking Mason and attorney named Dustin DuFault, who also agreed to debate Salza. DuFault, who says he is Catholic, is a 32nd degree Scottish Rite and York Rite Mason and Shriner. DuFault is also the sitting Worshipful Master of Unizar Lodge #347 in St. Paul and the Grand Lodge of Minnesota's representative to Chile. With some apparent reservations about his position, Mr. DuFault contacted AOTM a week before the debate insisting that the debate resolution be changed to whether Masonry is compatible with Catholicism and not Christianity in general. DuFault told the AOTM that he didn't think he could prove Masonry was compatible with Christianity, but evidently thought he could prove Masonry was compatible with Catholicism!

Salza agreed to the resolution change. But just three days before the debate, DuFault also backed out, using Tilton's excuse that he didn't have "permission" from the Grand Master. Evidently, either the Grand Master of Masons of Minnesota (John L. Cook, Jr.) does not want his subjects embarrassed in a public debate, or these Masons are using the lack of "permission" as an excuse because *they* don't want to be embarrassed.

Before he'd backed out, Mr. DuFault admitted to having read Salza's two books on Masonry to prepare for the debate. (Salza later explained that the Grand Master's alleged lack of "permission" is the most common excuse Masons use not to debate; Masons think this excuse allows them to save face while blaming their cowardice on someone else. In fact, when Salza learned of DuFault's defection, he took DuFault to task on his excuse by seeking the confirmation from the Grand Master of the lack of "permission" and also inviting the Grand Master to debate in DuFault's place. The Grand Master did not respond.)

When I [Michael Matt] called Salza to relay the bad news, I said to him, "Guess what?" John replied, "He backed out, of course!" Salza graciously agreed to speak at the AOTM anyway. While I was surprised that such high-ranking Masons were not willing to defend their Craft, Salza was not. He explained that he has had a standing invitation to debate the issue for the past twelve years, and no Mason has ever taken the challenge. Salza explained that Protestant ministries against Masonry have had similar problems over the years in getting Masons to debate (e.g., Ex-Masons for Jesus, Ephesians 5.11). It is obvious that "Catholic" Freemasons – and certainly the best that Minnesota had to offer – are unable to defend their Craft against the condemnations of the Church and the truth that Christ is the only means of salvation. But this became even more obvious on the evening of Salza's presentation at the Argument of the Month, when something unprecedented occurred.

About a half hour before Salza took the stage, I was informed that Mr. DuFault and some of his fellow brother Masons were in the audience! I confirmed the report by speaking personally to Mr. DuFault, moments before the debate. As the moderator of the debate, I took the microphone and invited him to the podium. He remained in the audience. I then invited any of the other Masons to come up and defend their position. There was no response.

Salza then took the stage and, instead of giving his normal presentation, gave his ten-minute opening statement, quoting from papal condemnations and from Minnesota's Masonic rituals, which he took directly from The Grand Lodge of Minnesota's website, relentlessly demonstrating that Freemasonry was a false religion which denied Christ as the only means of salvation.

After Salza completed his opening statement, he looked out into the audience and said: "I know there are Masons present here this evening. So, to you Masons, have I misquoted the ritual?" There was a dead and uneasy silence.

Salza again attempted to engage the Masons by saying, "Have I misquoted the teachings of the Church?" Another long silence. Salza continued, "Then you agree with my position that Freemasonry is incompatible with the teachings of Jesus Christ?" More astounding silence. Salza concluded, "Good! There are many priests here this evening who can hear your confessions." While his last comment prompted chuckles from the crowd, Salza was dead serious. He's brought "Catholic" Masons who remained silent that evening to the inevitable crossroads of truth and error: Either choose the truth of Jesus Christ or the lies of Freemasonry. Christ leads to eternal life, and Masonry leads to eternal damnation. Salza elaborated on these truths by speaking for another 40 minutes to the crowd's delight. Perhaps the Masonic silence was a good sign that conversions will follow. Please God!

Note: Dustin DuFault called Salza the next week to inform him that he had resigned from Freemasonry. Praise God!